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 FM AMEMBASSY SALISBURY
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4675
 INFO RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 850
 RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 887
 RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY GABORONE 909
 RUEHCR/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 789
 RUEHLD/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1206
 RUTAOH/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA 1282
 RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 993
 RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 2096
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 772
 BT
 C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SALISBURY 6353

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E. O: 12065:N/A

TAGS: POR3, Z1

SUBJ: EXPLOSION DAMAGES ZANU HEADQUARTERS; FIVE DEATHS REPORTED

REF: SALISBURY 6349 (NOTAL)

AT 1630 LOCAL TIME, THREE HOURS AFTER A SINGLE EXPLOSION
 INSIDE THE ZANU-PF PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN DOWNTOWN SALISBURY

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State Dept. review completed

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DID SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE BUILDING AND SURROUNDING AREA, THE SITUATION IS CALM. THE ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT REPORTED THAT AT LEAST FIVE PEOPLE WERE KILLED BY THE BLAST, AND ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL REPORT PUT THE NUMBER OF INJURED AT 59. NAMES OF THE VICTIMS HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED. THE EXPLOSION OCCURRED ON THE TOP (FOURTH) FLOOR OF THE BUILDING, BLOWING OFF THE ROOF AND CAUSING ONE WALL TO COLLAPSE ONTO THE TOP OF A NEXT-DOOR BAKERY. MANY OF THE INJURED WERE INSIDE THE CROWDED BAKERY.

2. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LEARN ANY DETAILS ABOUT THE CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION (THOUGH MOST PEOPLE ARE ASSUMING IT WAS A BOMB) NOR THE POSSIBLE PERPETRATORS. A ZANU-PF SPOKESMAN DENIED A RUMOR THAT THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS TO HAVE MET IN THE BUILDING THIS AFTERNOON. WE HAVE REPORTS OF AT LEAST TWO INCIDENTS IN WHICH WHITES IN THE VICINITY OF THE BLAST WERE LATER HARRASSED BY BLACK CROWDS, ACCUSING THE WHITES OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE BLAST. POLICE BROKE UP THE CROWDS, AND APPEAR TO HAVE THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. AIR TRAFFIC IN AND OUT OF SALISBURY IS PROCEEDING NORMALLY, ALTHOUGH WE HAD ONE UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT LAND BORDERS WERE BEING CLOSED. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO DANGER TO AMERICAN CITIZENS IN ZIMBABWE. NEARLY ALL SHOPS AND OFFICES HAVE CARRIED ON BUSINESS AS USUAL, OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE EXPLOSION. KEELEY

END OF MESSAGE

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